ATLAS COMICS
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NO. 1 FEB 43382
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SGT. STRYKER'S
DEATH SQUAD™
SAVAGE COMBAT TALES
FEATURING
NEW EXCITING WAR ADVENTURES!
I MUST REACH THAT GRENADE!
NOTHING LESS WILL STOP THE NAZI TANK! NOTHING!

FEBRUARY, 1943...“OPERATION TORCH” IS **OVER!** AMERICAN FORCES HAVE JOINED WITH THE BRITISH AND FRENCH IN **TRAPPING** FIELD MARSHALL IRWIN ROMMEL'S FAMED **AFRICA KORPS**... BUT SUDDENLY, UNEXPECTEDLY, THE DESERT FOX **COUNTERATTACKS!** AND INEXPERIENCED U.S. TROOPS REEL IN BITTER **DEFEAT!**...YET, IN SUCH MOMENTS ARE **LEGENDS** BORN...LEGENDS SUCH AS THAT OF...

SGT. STRYKER'S DEATH SQUAD!

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ANDY! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
OVER HERE, BEN! ME AN' THE LIEUTENANT ARE FINE!
BUT I SURE DO WISH SOMBODY'D REMIND THOSE JERRIES THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE FINISHED IN NORTH AFRICA!
WHAT'S THE SITUATION OUTSIDE, STRYKER? HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO RAISE BATTALION ON THIS THING!
SGT. BLOOM THINKS THEY'RE SOFTENING US UP FOR SOME KIND OF ATTACK, SIR!
HE'S ORGANIZING THE DEFENSE PERIMETER! SAYS WE'LL NEED EVERY MAN!
WE'VE GOT THOSE FOUR PRISONERS LOCKED IN THE CELLAR! ORDERS WERE TO HOLD 'EM UNTIL A CONVOY BACK FROM THE FRONT COULD DELIVER 'EM TO CORPS FOR COURT MARTIAL!
YOU AND KENTON GO AHEAD! I'LL TRY REACHING HQ ONE MORE TIME, THEN JOIN YOU...WITH FOUR VOLUNTEERS!
THOSE PLANES ARE CONCENTRATING ON THE CENTER OF TOWN, ANDY!...WE'LL SKIRT AROUND THE EDGE!
AW, BEN... DON'T YOU EVER GET TIRED OF NURSE-MAIDIN' ME?

YET THE HORRORS HAVE JUST **BEGUN**... HORRORS SUCH AS ONLY **WAR** IS WITNESS TO! HORRORS TO SHAKE **ANY** MEN, **ALL** MEN... TO **CHANGE** THEM AND CAUSE THEM TO BE....

REBORN *in* BATTLE

BUZZARDS!... DIRTY STINKIN' BUZZARDS... I'LL...
POW
POW
POW
THAT WON'T HELP, ANDY! ALL WE CAN DO NOW IS JOIN THE REST OF THE COMPANY!
!!
HOLD THE LIGHT HIGHER, BEN... STEADY!
C-CAN YOU DO IT, DAD? SAVE MRS. ENGSTROM AND THE...
THERE, SON...THE MOST SACRED THING IN THE WORLD... HUMAN LIFE!
MOTHER AND BABY... BOTH ALIVE!
LORD, DAD... WHAT AM I DOING HERE?
HEY, BEN... THERE'S...
STRYKER! KENTON!... FIND A SPOT... ON THE DOUBLE!!
...SGT. BLOOM!

"OUR TROUBLES ARE JUST STARTING! IF THE JERRIES TAKE THIS PLACE, THEY'RE IN POSITION TO CLOBBER ANY OF OUR UNITS PULLIN' BACK FROM THE FRONT!"

I HEAR THOSE GERMAN PARATROOPS ARE VETS BEN...THEY'RE COMBAT ELITE!

WELL, I'M READY FOR 'EM.. 'SPECIALLY IF IT GETS DOWN TO IN-FIGHTIN'! LOOK WHAT I TRADED FROM ONE'A THOSE CONVOY JOCKEYS!

LOOKS LIKE AN OLD .45 REVOLVER FROM W.W.1! GOOD WEAPON...LET'S HOPE YOU WON'T NEED IT, ANDY!

THERE YOU GO AGAIN! WORRYIN' ABOUT ME! YOU'RE AS BAD AS LAURIE!

DARLING!...IT'S LIKE THE WORLD IS FALLING APART...YOU DRAFTED... ANDY ENLISTING...

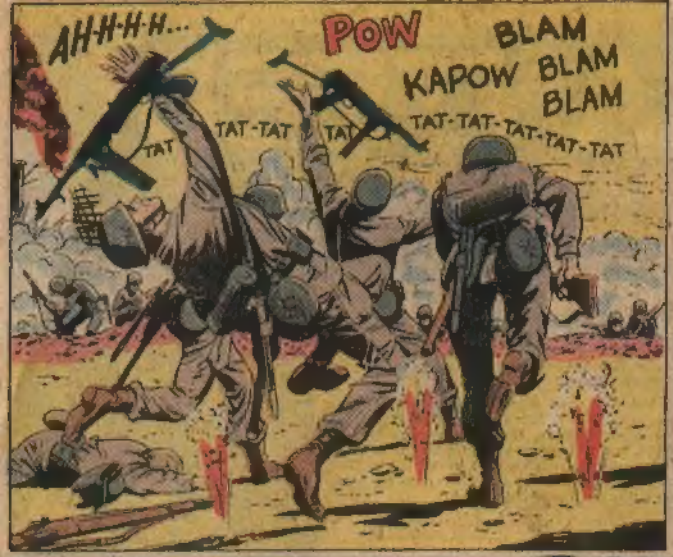
WITH HITLER IN EUROPE, PEARL HARBOR BOMBED... I GUESS WE'RE NEEDED, ALL RIGHT!...ONLY...

OR BEING KILLED, BEN! PROMISE YOU'LL TAKE CARE...OF YOURSELF, OF ANDY! PROMISE YOU'LL BOTH COME BACK TO ME!

HOW CAN I DO IT, LAURIE... FIGHTING, KILLING OTHER HUMAN BEINGS?

BEN! HERE THEY COME!

POW POW


AH-H-H-H...
POW
BLAM
KAPOW
BLAM
BLAM
TAT
TAT-TAT
TAT
TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT

I...I CAN'T SHOOT!... I JUST CAN'T!

HOLY...!!...STRYKER, I BEEN IN THIS OUTFIT SINCE THE LAST WAR AN NEVER SAW SHOOTIN' LIKE THAT!
WHO TAUGHT YOU
MY DAD!

A SMALL TOWN DOCTOR IN THE DEPRESSION WAS MIGHTY POOR... WE HAD TO BE GOOD HUNTERS TO HELP KEEP FOOD ON THE TABLE!
WELL, IT'S MADE YOU A NATURAL, SON!

I HOPE NOT, SGT. BLOOM! MY DAD ALSO TAUGHT ME...
THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SHOOTIN' GAME FOR SUPPER AND KILLIN' IN COLD BLOOD!

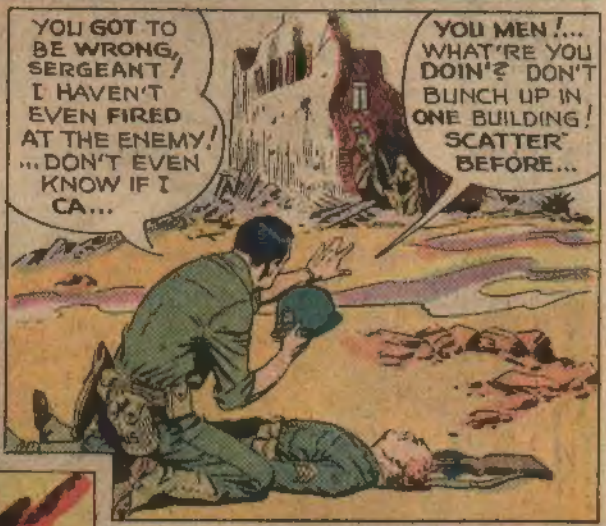
BAROOM
BEN!! W-WHAT??

TAT-TAT-TAT
TAT
BLAM
TANK!!... EVERYBODY BACK!... PULL BACK TO BETTER COVER!

BUT...
SGT. BLOOM!

ANDY!...GIVE ME A HAND!! GOTTA DRAG HIM TO SHELTER!
N-NO...TOO LATE, STRYKER! TAKE OVER... FOR ME! Y-YOU CAN... DO IT...EVERYONE ELSE TOO GREEN...BUT....

Y-YOU'RE... THE NATURAL...


YOU GOT TO BE WRONG, SERGEANT! I HAVEN'T EVEN FIRED AT THE ENEMY! ...DON'T EVEN KNOW IF I CA...
YOU MEN!... WHAT'RE YOU DOIN'? DON'T BUNCH UP IN ONE BUILDING! SCATTER BEFORE...

BA LAAM

DEAR LORD! NO!...EVERY LAST MA...
ANDY!! OH, GOD... ANDY!!

HERE, BEN! DROPPED MY .45 RUNNIN'! HAD TO CUT BACK FOR IT! LUCKY, HUH?
LIKE I KEEP SAYIN, YOU WORRY ABOUT ME FOR...

TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT
N...NOTHIN'...

PROMISE YOU'LL TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND ANDY!

TAKE CARE OF ANDY... TAKE CARE OF ANDY!

CLANK... CLANK... CLANK...

I LET YOU DOWN, LAURIE... YOU AND ANDY! CAN'T BRING HIM BACK, BUT SOME WAY... SOMEHOW, I'LL MAKE IT UP IF IT TAKES THE WHOLE WAR!!
GONNA START BY STOPPING THAT TANK... BUT I'LL NEED MORE THAN THIS CARBINE!

THE RUINS OF OUR COMMAND POST! MIGHT BE SOMETHING HERE... BAZOOKA... GRENADES, OR... WHAT TH...??
NO USE... NOTHIN' BUDGES!
KEEP AT IT, MUSCLE-HEAD... OR WE ALL SUFFOCATE!

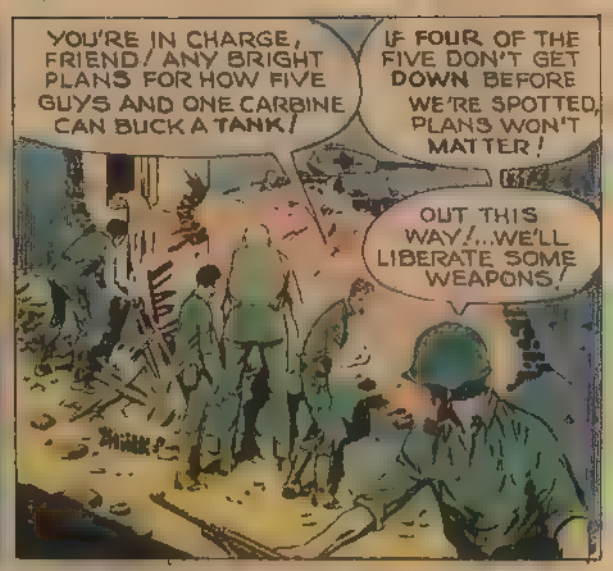
THE PRISONERS!! STILL ALIVE IN THE CELLAR!
LISTEN, DOWN THERE... MAYBE I CAN HELP YOU!

SEARCHING THE DEBRIS, STRYKER FINDS...
THE LIEUTENANT'S BODY...AND AN UNEXPLODED GRENADE ON HIS BELT!
THE JERRIES ARE BLOWIN' THE PLACE APART HOUSE BY HOUSE...ONE MORE BLAST SHOULDN'T DRAW ANY NOTICE!

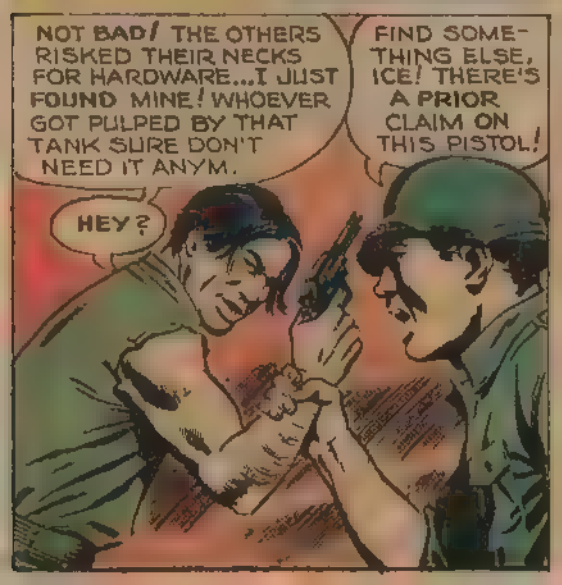
WUMP

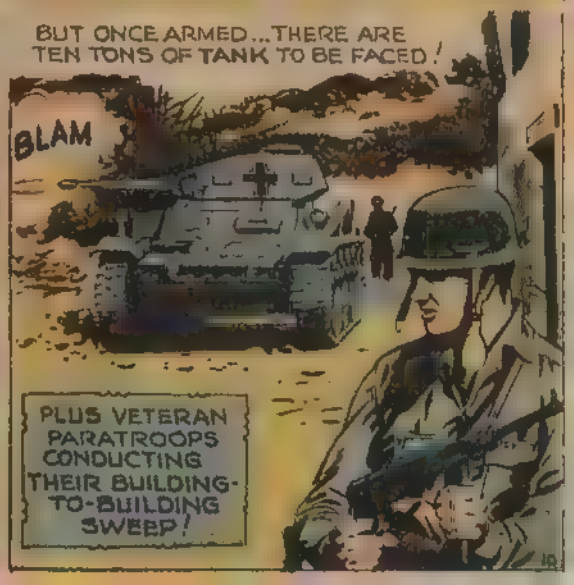
SONUVAGUN! NO WONDER THAT DOOR GIMME TROUBLE!... SOMEBODY LEFT A BUILDIN' ON TOP OF IT!
WELL, YOU CAN THANK THE GUY WHO TOOK IT OFF, TURK...
I'M GONNA BE KIND'A BUSY GETTIN' MY TAIL OUTA THIS WAR!

SURE, YOU COULD RUN... BUT IT'D BE STRAIGHT INTO THE JERRIES... AN' THEY'RE NOT TAKIN' PRISONERS!
YOU RESURRECTED US FROM THE DEAD, FRIEND, I SUPPOSE IT'S THE LEAST WE CAN DO... PARTICULARLY SINCE WE HAVE NO CHOICE! RIGHT, ICE?... LEE?... TURK?
UH...IF WE DID HAVE A CHOICE, DUKE....
MIGHT BE BEST TO THROW IN WITH ME!...THERE'S A TANK I MEAN TO GET!



AND IN THE COURSE OF THAT "LIBERATION", ACTING SERGEANT BEN STRYKER LEARNS SOMETHING ABOUT HIS FOUR RELUCTANT RECRUITS AND THEIR PAST!





BUT A BUILDING SWEPT CAN BE REOCCUPIED!!
WHUMP
TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT
BURP P
BURP P
VAS IST!?
BUR-R-R-R-R-P
THEN
ICE!... NO GRENADES! I WANT THIS MACHINE IN WORKING ORDER!
AN' MAYBE GIFT WRAPPED WHILE WE'RE AT IT, STRYKER!
CHECK THE STREET, ICE! GERMAN'S PERIMETER FORCE IS COMIN' IN ..THEY'RE GONNA BE BAD NEWS EVEN WITH THIS TANK!
ANYONE THINK THEY CAN HANDLE THIS BABY'S CANNON?
I HAVE HAD SOME SMALL EXPERIENCE WITH AMERICAN ARMOR, SERGEANT!

...AND AN ENEMY VEHICLE BECOMES A FORTRESS!

TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT BU-R-R-R-R-R-P

BLAM

BUR-R-R-R-R-P

TAT-TAT-TAT TAT

...A FORTRESS THAT HOLDS!

HEY!... SONUVAGUN! THERE AIN'T NO MORE OF 'EM... WE WON!

CRACK

LORD, DAD... I'VE SLAIN MY FIRST MAN!... NOW I'M A KILLER!!

THUMP!

IT'S ALL OVER... AN' WE'RE STILL ALIVE AN' KICKIN'!... KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?...

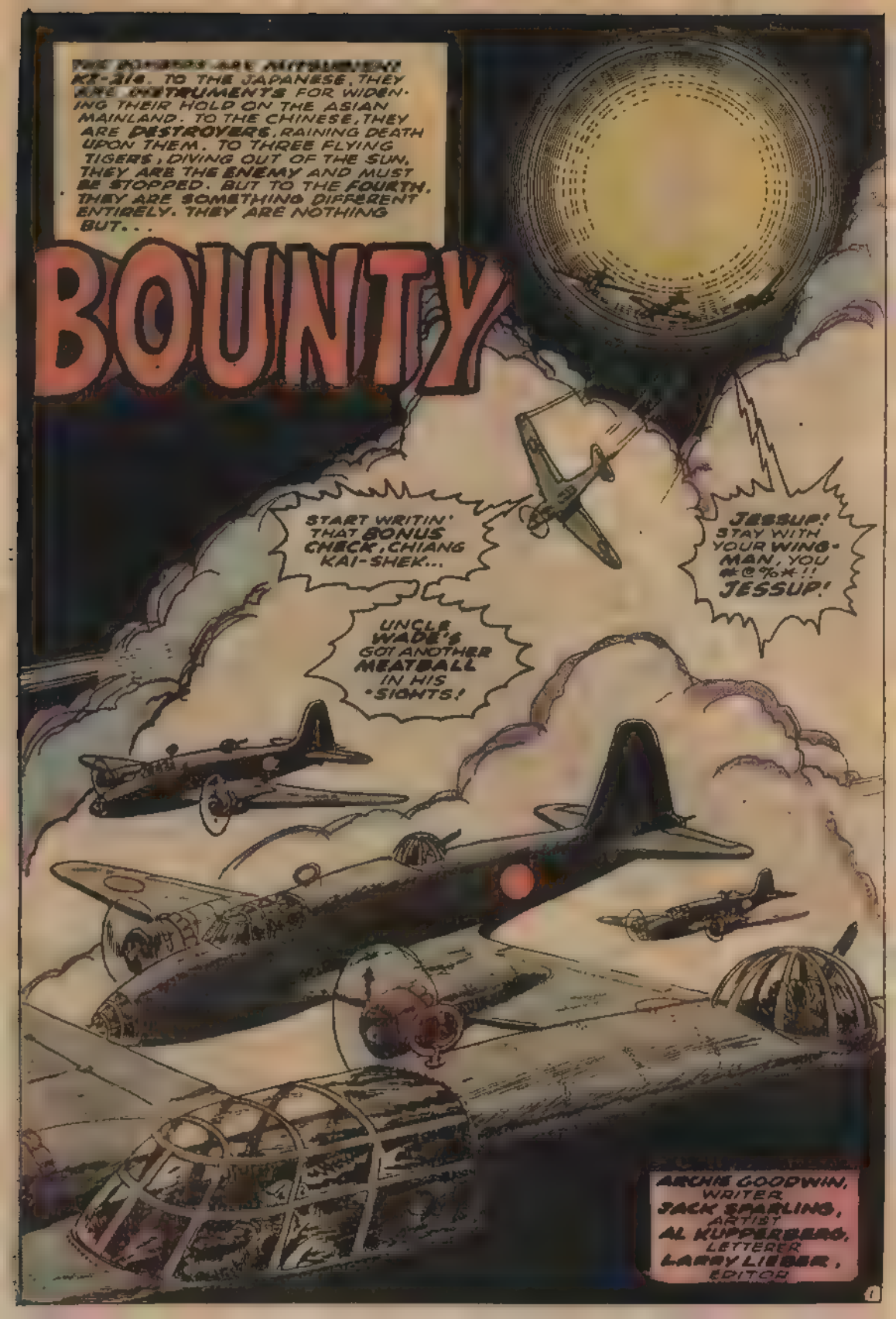
WE STARTED OUT AS JAILBIRDS TODAY, BUT NOW, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, WE'RE BLASTED HEROES!!

WAR!... WHAT A THING! IT SEEMS TO HAVE TURNED THOSE FOUR INTO BETTER MEN...

BUT WHAT ABOUT ME?... HAVE I BECOME WORSE?

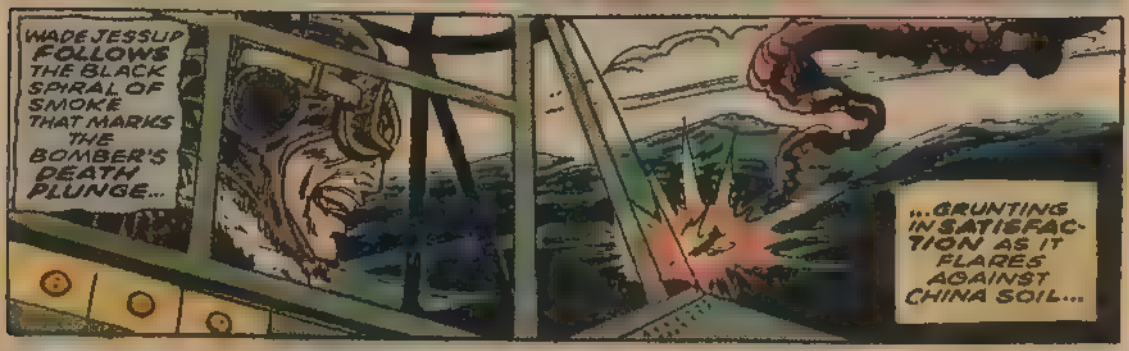
BUT THERE IS NO EASY ANSWER TO BEN STRYKER'S GRIM QUESTION... ONLY AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE, WHERE NEXT ISSUE...

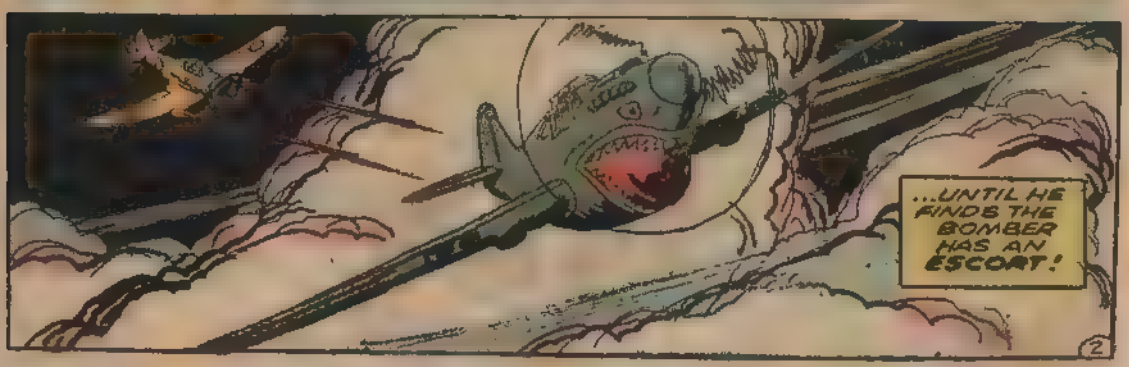
THE DEATH SQUAD EARNS ITS NAME!

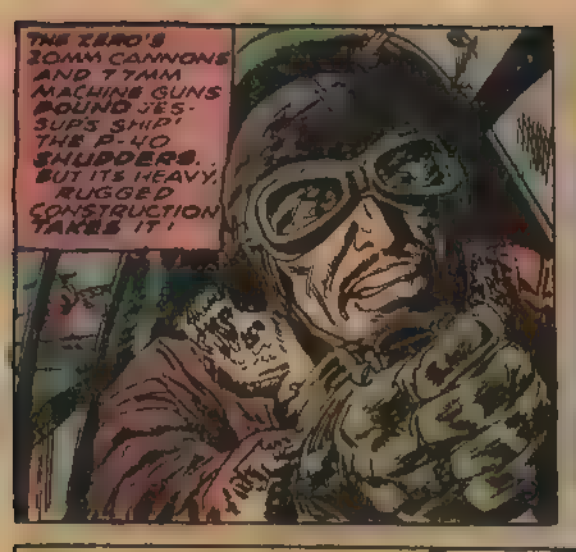

THE BOMBERS ARE MITSUBISHI KI-21a. TO THE JAPANESE, THEY ARE INSTRUMENTS FOR WIDENING THEIR HOLD ON THE ASIAN MAINLAND. TO THE CHINESE, THEY ARE DESTROYERS, RAINING DEATH UPON THEM. TO THREE FLYING TIGERS, DIVING OUT OF THE SUN, THEY ARE THE ENEMY AND MUST BE STOPPED. BUT TO THE FOURTH, THEY ARE SOMETHING DIFFERENT ENTIRELY. THEY ARE NOTHING BUT...
BOUNTY
START WRITIN' THAT BONUS CHECK, CHIANG KAI-SHEK...
UNCLE WADE'S GOT ANOTHER MEATBALL IN HIS SIGHTS!
JESSUP! STAY WITH YOUR WING-MAN, YOU #@%*!! JESSUP!
ARCHIE GOODWIN, WRITER
JACK SPARLING, ARTIST
AL KUPPERBERG, LETTERER
LARRY LIEBER, EDITOR

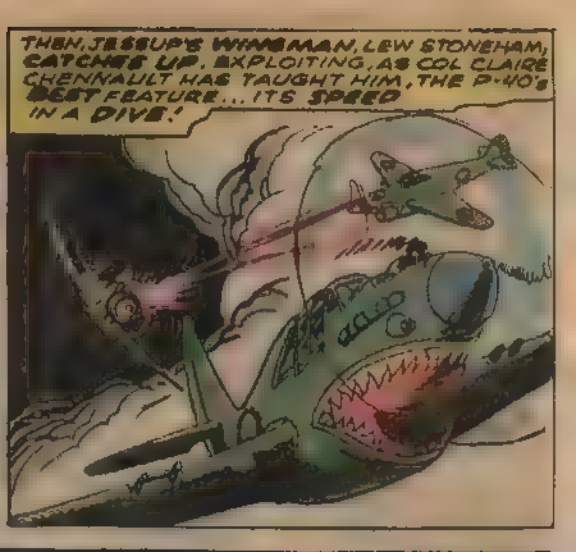
SORRY, FLIGHT LEADER ... I DIDN'T GET THAT! YOU'RE COMIN' THROUGH GARBLED!

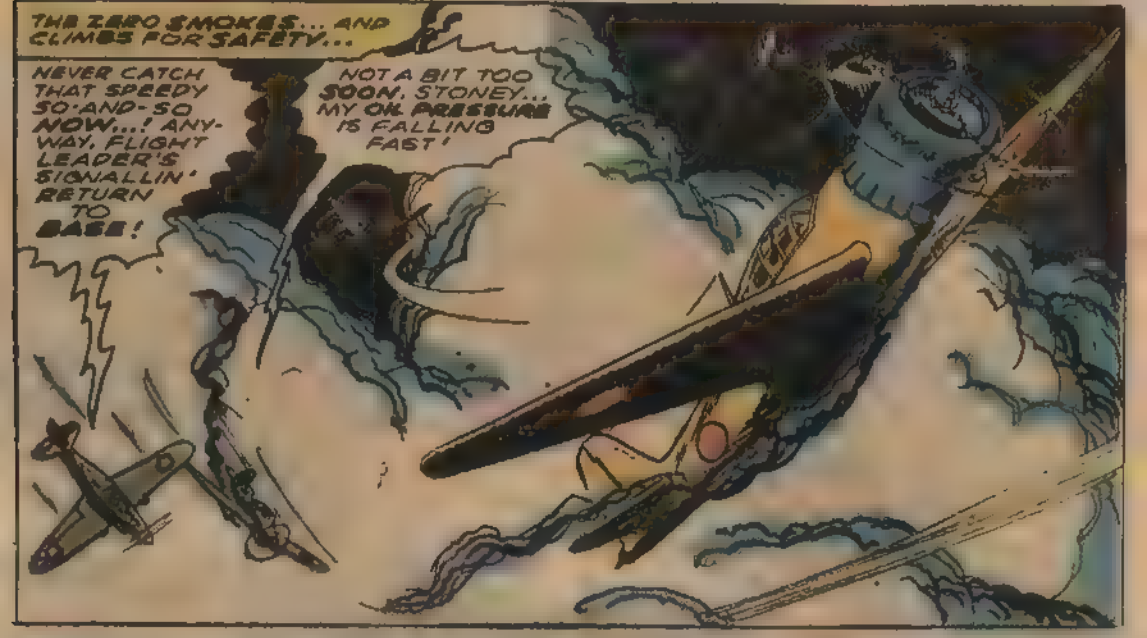
...AND I GOT OTHER FISH TO FRY!



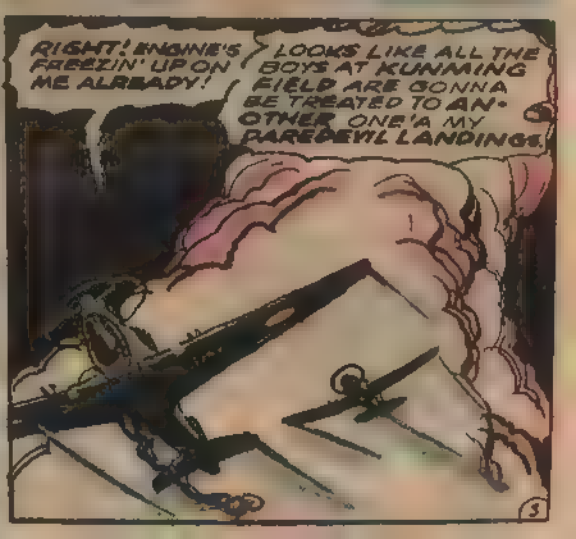



THE ZERO'S 20MM CANNONS AND 7.7MM MACHINE GUNS POUND JESSUP'S SHIP! THE P-40 SHUDDERS... BUT ITS HEAVY, RUGGED CONSTRUCTION TAKES IT!


THEN, JESSUP'S WINGMAN, LEW STONEHAM, CATCHES UP, EXPLOITING, AS COL CLAIRE CHENNAULT HAS TAUGHT HIM, THE P-40'S BEST FEATURE... ITS SPEED IN A DIVE!


THE ZERO SMOKES... AND CLIMBS FOR SAFETY...
NEVER CATCH THAT SPEEDY SO-AND-SO NOW...! ANYWAY, FLIGHT LEADER'S SIGNALLIN' RETURN TO BASE!
NOT A BIT TOO SOON, STONEY... MY OIL PRESSURE IS FALLING FAST!

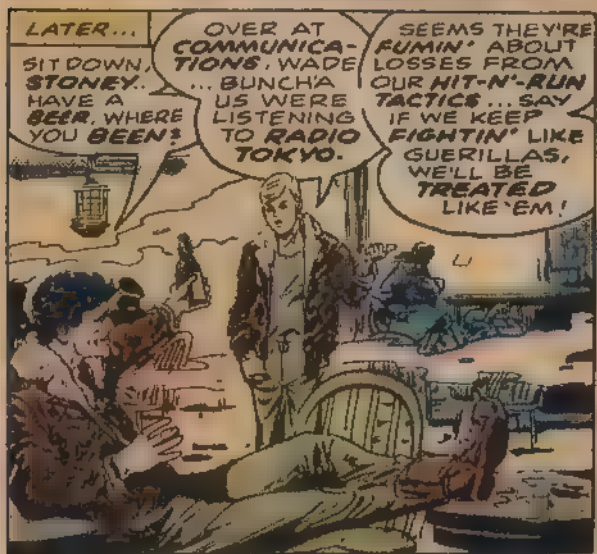
THAT ZEKE TAGGED YOUR OIL LINE, WADE!

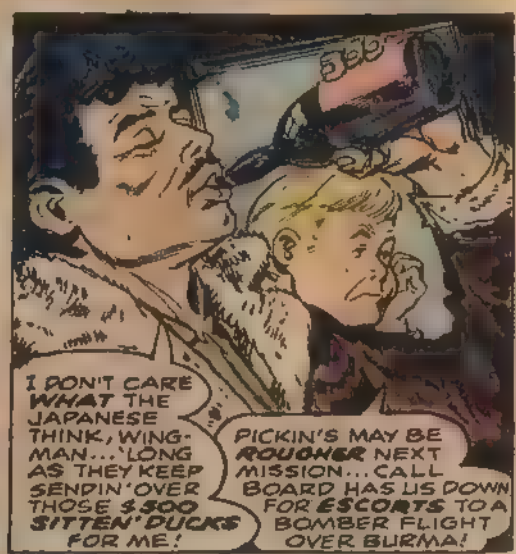

RIGHT! ENGINE'S FREEZIN' UP ON ME ALREADY!
LOOKS LIKE ALL THE BOYS AT KUNMING FIELD ARE GONNA BE TREATED TO ANOTHER ONE'A MY DAREDEVIL LANDINGS.

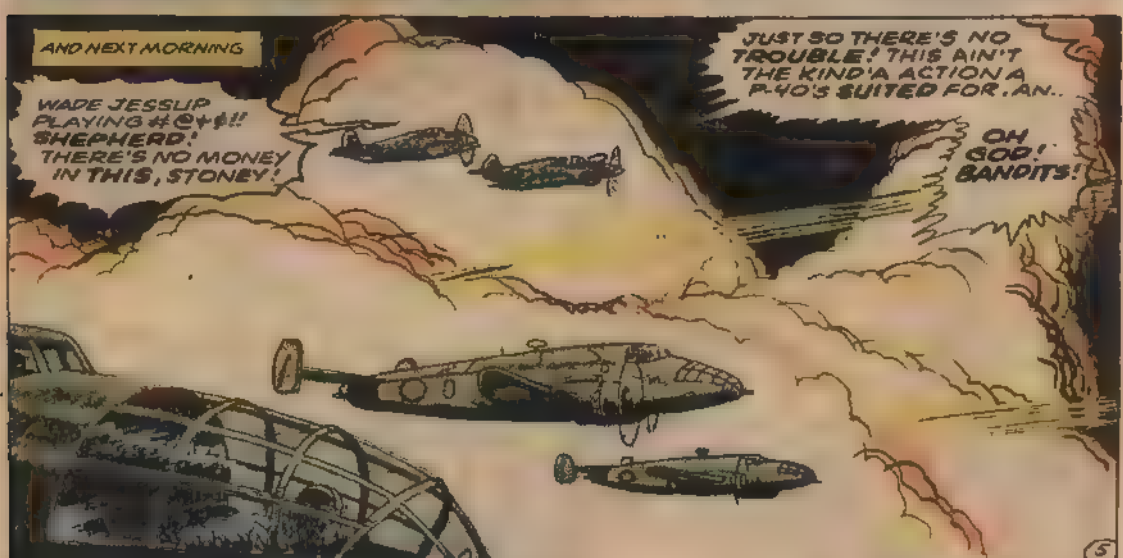
AND...
JESSUP! THE 90 MPH!! PLANE'S A WRECK!
YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY, FLIGHT LEADER... ANY LANDING YOU WALK AWAY FROM IS A GOOD ONE!
NOT WHEN THE TIGERS ONLY HAVE ABOUT FIFTY OPERATIONAL AIRCRAFT AT ANY GIVEN TIME!
THAT ZERO SCORED ON YOU BECAUSE YOU WERE TOO BUSY PINPOINTING WHERE YOUR KILL WENT DOWN!
YOU BET I WAS! THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT PAY'S A $500 BOUNTY FOR EVERY JAP PLANE... BUT ONLY IF THEY CAN FIND THE WRECKAGE.
WE'RE FIGHTING A WAR, JESSUP... NOT GUARANTEEING YOUR CALCUTTA BANK ACCOUNT GETS FAT ON BLOOD MONEY!
SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, HERO. I PLAN TO COME OUT OF THIS WITH MORE THAN WARM HAND-SHAKES FROM THE LOCAL COOLIES!
YOU'RE COMIN' OUT WITH A FAT LIP!
4

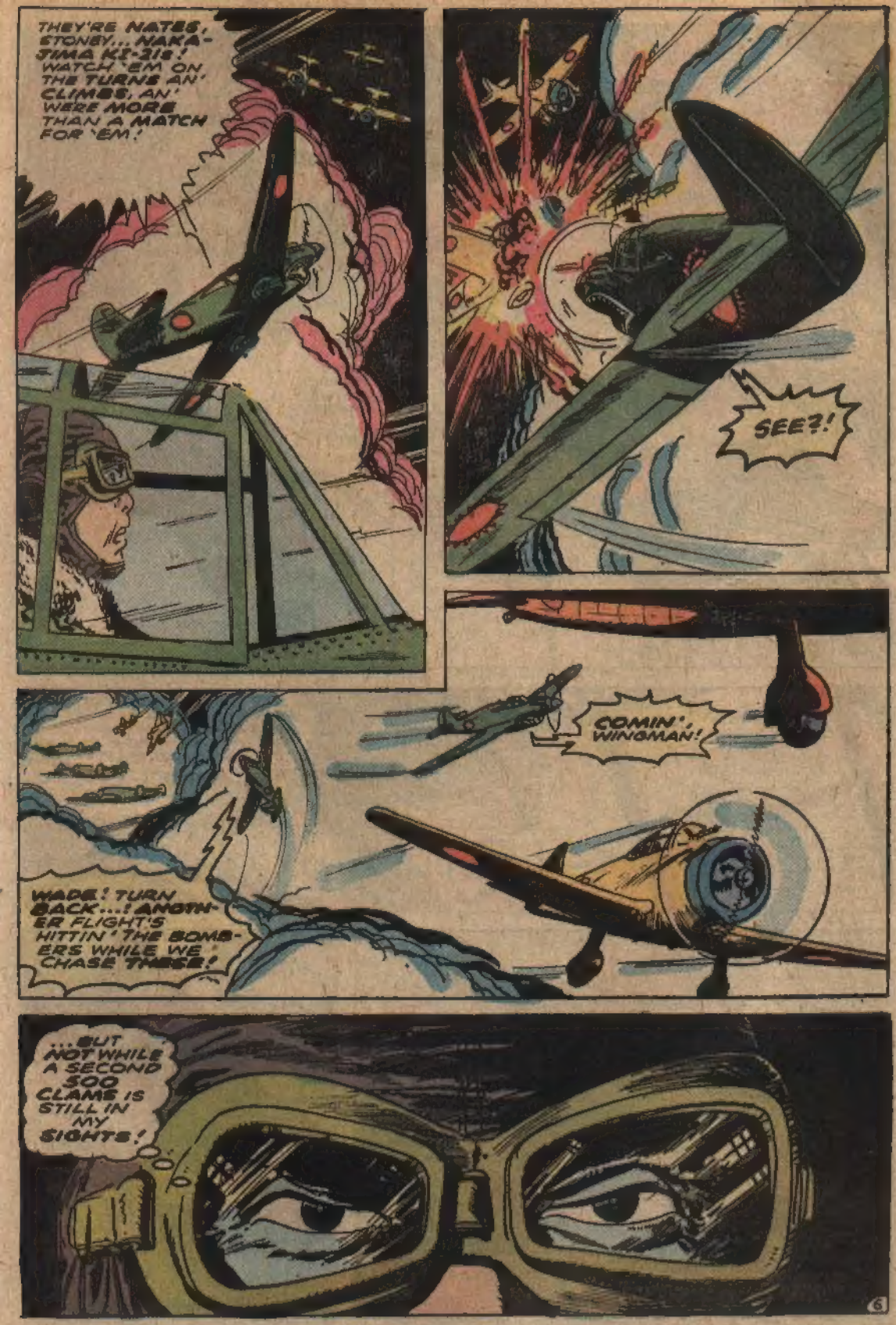
I OUTSHOOT AN'OUTFLY EVERYBODY IN THE SQUADRON! YOU THINK IT'D BE DIFFERENT..
. WHEN IT CAME TO OUTPUNCHIN!

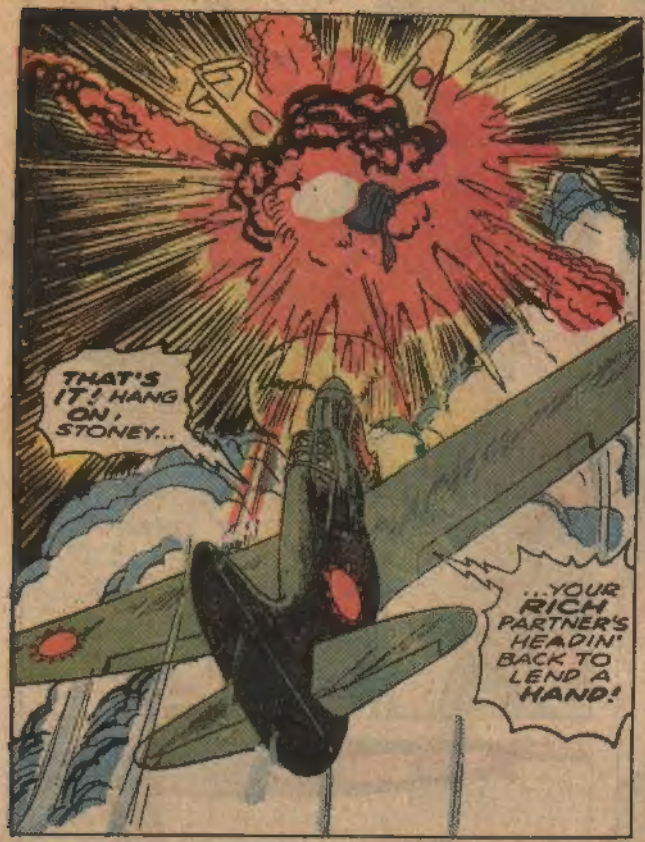
HOW CAN YOU BE WING-MAN TO A CRUD LIKE THAT, STONEY?
WELL, HE IS ONE'A THE BEST.. GUESS I KINDA RESPECT THAT IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING ELSE.


LATER...
SIT DOWN, STONEY.. HAVE A BEER, WHERE YOU BEEN?
OVER AT COMMUNICA-TIONS, WADE ... BUNCH'A US WERE LISTENING TO RADIO TOKYO.
SEEMS THEY'RE FUMIN' ABOUT LOSSES FROM OUR HIT-N'-RUN TACTICS ... SAY IF WE KEEP FIGHTIN' LIKE GUERILLAS, WE'LL BE TREATED LIKE 'EM!


I DON'T CARE WHAT THE JAPANESE THINK, WING-MAN... 'LONG AS THEY KEEP SENDIN' OVER THOSE $500 SITTEN' DUCKS FOR ME!
PICKIN'S MAY BE ROUGHER NEXT MISSION... CALL BOARD HAS US DOWN FOR ESCORTS TO A BOMBER FLIGHT OVER BURMA!

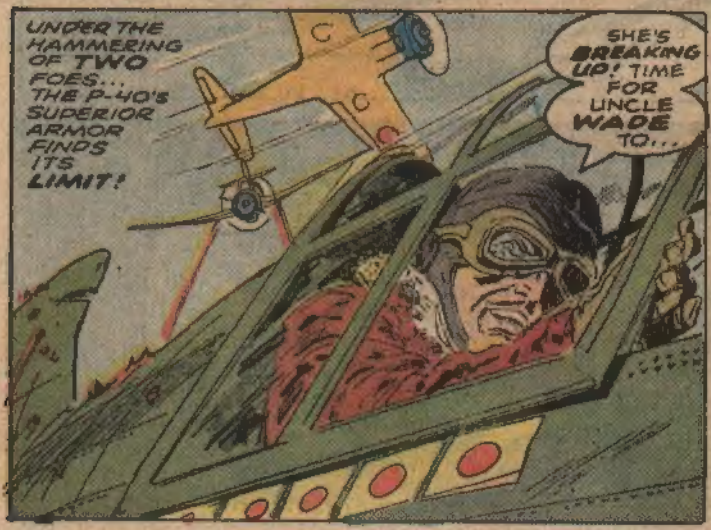

AND NEXT MORNING
WADE JESSUP PLAYING #@+$!! SHEPHERD! THERE'S NO MONEY IN THIS, STONEY!
JUST SO THERE'S NO TROUBLE! THIS AIN'T THE KIND'A ACTION A P-40'S SUITED FOR, AN..
OH GOD! BANDITS!


THEY'RE NATES, STONEY... NAKA-JIMA KI-21s! WATCH 'EM ON THE TURNS AN' CLIMBS, AN' WERE MORE THAN A MATCH FOR 'EM!
SEE?!
COMIN', WINGMAN!
WADE! TURN BACK...! ANOTHER FLIGHT'S HITTIN' THE BOMBERS WHILE WE CHASE THESE!
...BUT NOT WHILE A SECOND SOO CLAME IS STILL IN MY SIGHTS!


THAT'S IT! HANG ON, STONEY...
...YOUR RICH PARTNER'S HEADIN' BACK TO LEND A HAND!

BUT JESSUP SWINGS HIS SHIP AROUND TO FIND...
STONEY!
TOO BAD, KID, YOU WERE A GOOD WING-MAN!..

BUT I GREW UP TOO HUNGRY TO CRY OVER ANYTHING ON A DAY WHEN I'VE MADE A THOUSAND BUC--
ZEROES!


UNDER THE HAMMERING OF TWO FOES... THE P-40'S SUPERIOR ARMOR FINDS ITS LIMIT!
SHE'S BREAKING UP! TIME FOR UNCLE WADE TO...

...OTCH!
AN' PRAY THOSE ZEKES GET BUSY WITH THE BOMBERS INSTEAD OF ME!

YEAH! THEY'RE BACK TO THE FIGHT! ...I'M HOME FREE!

OKAY, I'M DOWN... IN ONE PIECE! GOTTA GET RID OF MY CHUTE, THEN --
HEY!

Whew! THOUGHT FOR A SECOND YOU GUYS WERE JAPS! WHAT ARE YOU... GUERILLAS? ...BANDITS? NO MATTER...
CHECK OUT THE BACK OF MY JACKET ...SEE? I'M A FLYING TIGER...

DON'CHA READ!! I'M A FLYING TIG--
BRIIIP
KRAK
KA-POW

TAKE HIS JACKET, LUONG... THAT WILL BE PROOF ENOUGH.
TRUE! AND WE SHALL EAT WELL...
...ON THE 5000 YEN THE JAPANESE NOW OFFER AS A BOUNTY FOR FLYING TIGER PILOTS!
THE END

What's Happening With ATLAS

Comics is an escapist medium, no matter what the psychologists say. If you can entertain and make a valid social point, then all the better. But first and foremost, entertainment is our beg.

And just as Atlas was a Titan in Greek Mythology, so plan we to be a titan of comic books. If there's a doubt in your mind as to whether or not we can do it, take a look at our line-up. 'Cause this is what comics is all about!

Exciting and lusty adventures await **IRONJAW**, a savage sword and sandal epic set in the far future and brought to you by the team of **Michael Fleisher**, **Mike Sekowsky**, and **Jack Abel**.

A dearth of souls-in-torment causes Satan to summon the services of **THE GRIM GHOST**, a **Michael Fleisher/Ernie Colon** presentation in blazing HadeScope!

The Greatest Story Ever Told is what you'll find in **THE PHOENIX*** Atlas' sci-fi Man of Tomorrow. And if that sounds cryptic, don't sweat it! **Jeff Rovin** and **Sal Amendola** assure one and all that they know what they're doing!

Off in space, the saga of **WULF THE BARBARIAN** is set on a planet the size of which is beyond mortal comprehension. Written and penciled by **Larry Hama**, inked by **Klaus Janson**, this is sword and sorcery comics at its very best.

But **Hama's** not one to rest on his laurels! Together with **Pat Broderick** on pencils and **Frank McLaughlin** on inks, he has created a terrifying vision of tomorrow in **PLANET OF VAMPIRES**. It's the story of six astronauts who return from a Mars mission to find earth devastated by biological warfare. And the end result of this holocaust is a world divided into savages and a super-scientific race of vampires!

Meanwhile, back in the present, we've got **TARGITT**, a story of one man's vengeance against the mob. **Ric Meyers** and **Dan Adkins** is an unbeatable pair to tell the story of an unbeatable man!

Is he human or is he plant? After you read the adventures of **MORLOCK, 2001**, you can decide for yourself. **Michael Fleisher** and **Al Milgrom**, with an **Abel** assist from **Jack**, spearhead this exciting super-hero series.

After thousands of years, a Neanderthal man frozen in a block of ice is revived. Impossible, you say? Think again, and take a look at **THE BRUTE**, a CroMagnificent comic from **Michael Fleisher, Mike Sekowsky**, and **Pablo Marcos**.

Meanwhile, with the world of 1974 as their playground, **Steve Mitchell** and **Ernie Colon** bring us the action-packed adventures of **THE COUGAR**, a Hollywood stuntman-turned-thrillseeker.

And what **THE COUGAR** does for excitement, **THE SCORPION** does for money! **Howie Chaykin** helms this book, serving as writer/artist. Set in the 1930's, **THE SCORPION** is fraught with the kind of adventure that made the pulps great! Move over **DOC SAVAGE!**

As if these were not enough, there's **POLICE ACTION, VICKY, KID CODY** and **THE COMANCHE KID, SAVAGE COMBAT TALES** featuring **SGT. STRYKER AND HIS DEATH SQUAD, TALES OF EVIL, MIDNITE MADNESS**, and two super-hero titles so different, so exciting, that, for now, we've gotta keep 'em under wraps!

This, not to mention our colossal black and white books, **MOVIE MONSTERS, WEIRD TALES OF THE MACABRE, TALES OF THE SORCERESS**, and **THRILLING ADVENTURE STORIES**. The latter three are comics titles all, and showcase the talents of men such as **Jeff Jones, Leo Summers, Pablo Marcos, Mike Kaluta, Jack Sparling, Russ Heath, Neal Adams, Steve Ditko, John Severin, Ramon Torrents, Mike Ploog, Tom Sutton, Pat Boyette**, and a host of other top-notch comic folk!

As for Atlas' hard-working behind-the scenes men, publishing our comics are **Martin** and **Chip Goodman**, the men who created Marvel Comics. If you think their performance there was impressive, give 'em full rein with Atlas!

The editorial chores are in the calloused-but-capable hands of **Jeff Rovin** and **Larry Leiber**, supported by actor-turned-office-gremlin, **Ric Meyers**. In the production corner is expert mechanical man **Steve Mitchell**, whose first major crisis was learning that comics are not colored with Crayolas.

But when all is said and done, no matter who's behind them, comics are entertainment.

Atlas is might.

And Atlas Comics are mighty entertaining!

See you next month!